TL-11 - Vehicle Speed Reduction

Benefit/Cost of reducing CO_2e:

Arizona: 5.2 MMt between 2007-2020; 0.3% of 2020 emissions; $35/ton
New Mexico: 2.8 MMt between 2007-2020; 0.3% of 2020 emissions

Assessment: High Priority. Bin B. 9 out of 22 votes.

While this policy option could result in GHG emissions reductions due to greater fuel efficiency, it is likely to be politically and technically difficult to implement. The cost of implementing this policy option could range from revenue neutral to high, depending on the policy components selected.

Due largely to aerodynamic drag, as vehicle speed increases, fuel efficiency is reduced. The speed at which fuel economy is highest varies, but is typically below 60 miles per hour for a light-duty vehicle.[12] Federal Highway Administration tests of nine vehicles in 1997 found that fuel economy declined on average by 3.1 percent when speed increased from 55 mph to 60 mph and by 8.2 percent increasing from 65 to 70 mph.[13]

A vehicle speed reduction policy option could include any of a handful of components, including, but not limited to enhanced enforcement of speed limits, reduced speed limits for commercial trucks, and other reduced speed limits. Recognizing the value of such strategies, the American Trucking Association supports a mandated national 68 mph speed limit for safety and fuel economy reasons.

The Utah Energy Efficiency Strategy analyzed the fuel saving potential associated with better enforcement of Utah's speed limits and found that CO_2 would be reduced by 198,000 short tons per year in 2015 and 218,000 short tons in 2020. The cost of this program would be wholly or largely paid for by increased revenue from speeding fines. Co-benefits resulting from enhanced enforcement of speed limits include: reduced likelihood that an accident will be fatal due to reduced speeds. NO_x emissions are also expected to decline with better enforcement of speed limits.

[12] "Drive more efficiently," U.S.DOE and U.S. EPA, http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.shtml.
[13] *Transportation Energy Data Book*, 2006. Oak Ridge National Laboratory.